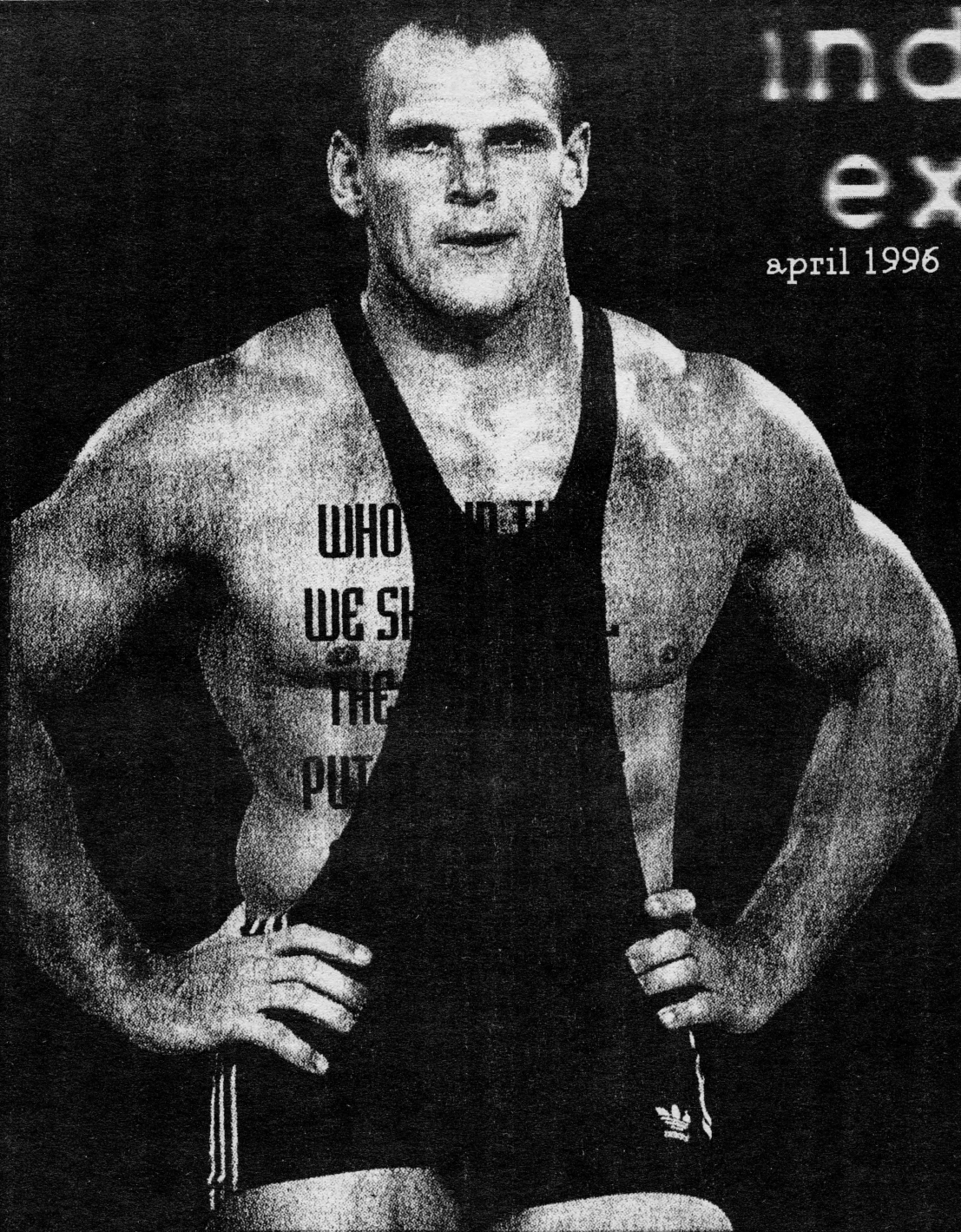


index magazine **MONTREAL**

literature performance

listings



ind
ex

april 1996

Featuring:

Poetry by Richard Vaughan and Catherine Hollis

Fiction by Golda Fried

Plus Webzine reviews and listings...

The Word

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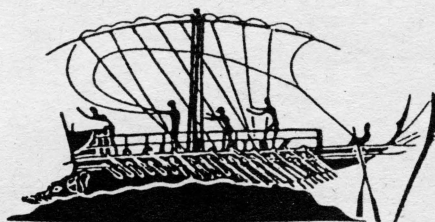
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EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Tracy Bohan (co-coordinating), **Andy brown** (co-coordinating), **Peter Dubé**,
Daegan Fryklind, **Liane Keightley**,

Taien Ng, **Trish Salah**

CONTRIBUTORS

Mathieu Beauséjour,

Gavin McInnes, **Dan Mitchell**

LAYOUT/DESIGN

Ingrid Hein (design goddess)

Tracy Bohan, **Andy brown** (minions)

COVER BY

Mathieu Beauséjour

ADVERTISING

Salman Husain

LISTINGS are free. The deadline is one week before the first of the month when you would like the listing to appear. We welcome your **LETTERS** about our magazine or any topic related to writing or the writing community. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. **SUBMISSIONS** Please send your prose, poetry, or textual hybrids to us. Bear in mind our space limitations: under 3,000 decent-sized words. Non-fiction pieces or proposals are also welcome. We gladly accept submissions of anything for review. **ADVERTISING** We like to support other small organizations by offering reduced advertising rates to independent bookstores and small publishers. **index** magazine survives on ad revenue, so we need your support too. **index** has a **CLASSIFIED** section where you'll find calls for submissions, contests, etc. It costs 10¢/word. **index ONLINE** In co-operation with The Mirror, **index** is available online as a part of Babylon. You'll find updated listings as well as articles from the current **index** and an online workshop where writers can share their work. **CONTACT US** at:

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e-mail

index_online@babylon.montreal.qc.ca

we **ind** are

ex

free/ small/ press: the medium is the manifesto



index is literature, performance, listings.

Or it's an armed-with-attitude rebellion bent on rewriting conditions and possibilities. (real) small publishing as revenge fantasy, and it goes like this: Cleopatra Jones in black leather bellbottoms so fine, posting a letter in a post-literate age. A search for heroines, super-scriptions. A counter-flow making its way up the Main.



Or no, not a gravity-defying, manifesto-making, ironic takealookatme kind of thing. Just a monthly record of our collective caffeine-mania, a test of friendships, software, and our printers' goodwill.

Desiring-machines, we dream of sharp tools and the ability to wield them with acumen. The world isn't made up of only 2 classes of people - those who own good hardware and those who don't - it just feels that way sometimes.

hello. hello?

It can't go on, it goes on.



Or maybe *index* is an index, no metaphor

By indicating, one orients oneself . . . multiple orientations lead to multiple points of departure.

Our map of the English literary landscape in Montreal is by no means "accurate," it's messy and "not to scale" (cartography is description, inscription - fiction). But it does point to some-time, some-place that we think is worth marking.

It's easier than it sounds, actually -- collecting words we like and giving them away.

index turns 3 this month.

You are personally invited to our party, April 19.

Tracy Bohan

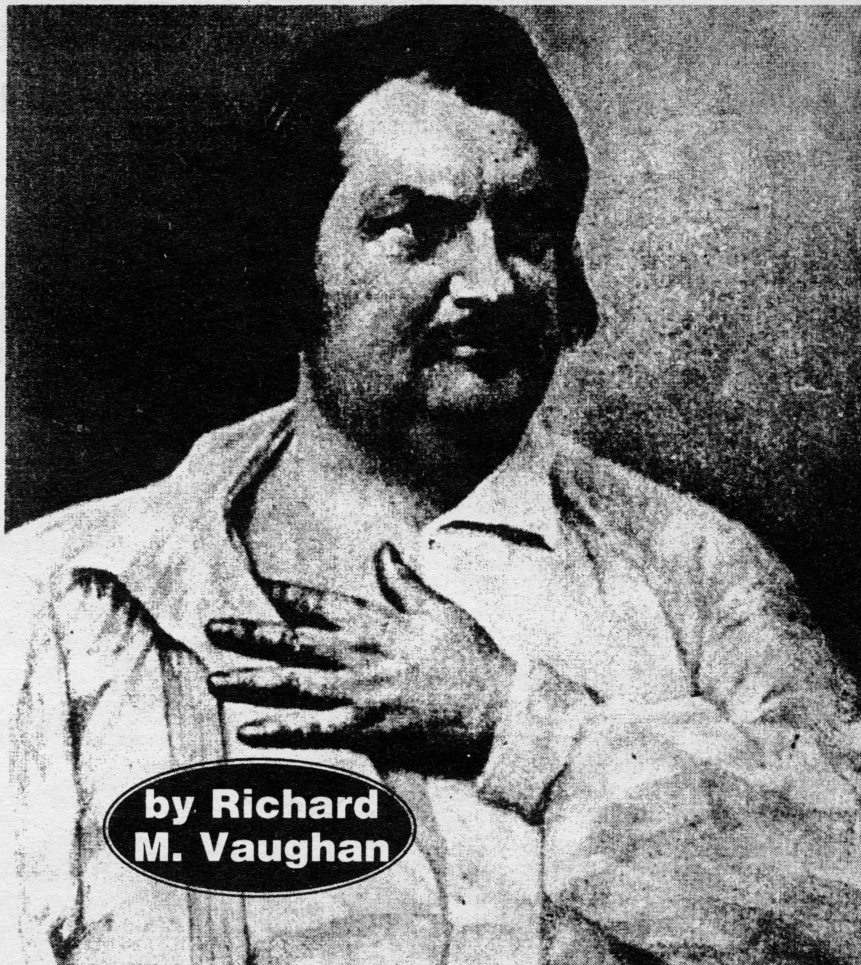
Ah, I started to get sick in New York started to cough all the time everytime I look out the window cold cold rain, I knew it was time to get back to get back so I packed up and gave a cold dry kiss to this guy. know I'll never see him again And I carry across the city and I carry across the state and I remember the sweet nights, the book of my mistakes . . .
(from *Wining Dining Drilling* 1993)

Ian Stephens 1955-1996

← excerpts from →

Seven sentences from Balzac's *A Murky Business* &

all of my life



by Richard
M. Vaughan

“in obedience to the false axiom *arrest all runaways*”

unless he's very large and the laws of perspective have bent
in this heat, for me, just once

he cannot
play walking fingers on the rings of my gut from forty feet and 3 buildings away

but I can see his cock blue/red, taut, thumbbed at the end (aubergine)
the head cinced
between rough fingers a tied off balloon, fat as his cheekbone
- a secret correlation I have proven true but kept to myself -

from my side, 40 feet and 3 buildings
high-summer air lightens lungs, opens pores
stickys the skin between nose and chin and now
I'm under there (his window) under him (on my knees)

lifts bodies

floating

“He drew the Marquis de Simeuse into a corner of the room and said, “You’re army men, dammit: soldiers understand one another.”

true story

I was seven and Dr. Snow passed his hand over my twitchy chest (whisper)
heart murmur, maybe, murmur maybe

he helped me button my shirt (big boy)
as if I was already dead why tell a child anything works against his life

tends to make him weak now and then heart murmur, a repeating sound, a backbeat, a curious tick
a wonder

true story until I was eleven I repeated every word I said under, with back breaths double-checking (and it’s standard two sets of tests heart murmur - an undersound only doctors hear)

my own voice, for certain mine see where words go

(into surgery unless we have

) to make him weak, big boy now can button his own shirt
can’t you? rub it out, like a leg cramp
can’t you press buttered brown paper over it, like a burn
can’t you talk me out, talk me down, talk me to sleep

Dr. Richard Snow, namesake, undername

because my mother hated her brothers and junior was insulting, considering the connotations the damage done (it can fix itself grow over he’s got a bit of fight considering whisper) what kind of mother - underhistory: adoption is a murmur between families -

true story and my mother undoubtedly had a crush on Dr.
undermarried, a too-skinny boy with *mal du coeur* is better than The Edge of Night
better than Women’s Classes in oriental cooking, wood turning, Swiss massage
(the pinkest, girly chest between them me a fetish - something both could love
big boy)

to visit me you must like coming here
your old friend Dr. Richard, namesake

(this isn’t about me)
subtext underfamily



it fills the holes

by
Golda Fried



There had been school and this big hole in the timetable.

She was looking down and not at me at all and so I ended up following her on to the train, past the seats and why weren't we sitting down? I had told myself, Shut up, Shut up. I had gotten myself on the train, after all.

You could've seen us in the lounge car. She was chatting it up with everyone else, giving each person two and a half minutes.

When we are there, we are in a drugstore. She picks out these gold dollar condoms saying in monotone, Hmm, a buck a fuck.

This is New Orleans, this is new orleans. If I can get her on to the abstract things maybe she can get lost in the coffee. Look here, The Abstract Book Shop and Cafe. And homemade chapbooks. The one in my hand's got pages that run ragged. Someone's taken off their wings and stapled them.

I'm reading the poems out loud. She bites into her po-boy sandwich, clams or oysters. On the side are my chipped nail-polished nails turning each page.

My reading voice arouses the interest of the cops at the next table. They don't pick up their coffee cups through the whole thing. My travelling companion's left three cream containers and five sugar packets all over the Formica, and here I am putting them back in her empty cup like mine.

She's asking the cops for directions. One rambles on about one street and the other drags on about the cross street. Yeah, and together they make a perfect square, my travelling companion grumbles on the way

out.

We get to the street corner and a big armchair comes at us at that very moment with this bearded guy behind it, who we find out is only seventeen. I sit down in the thrown-out armchair not even filling half of it, it seems. I am among sticky garbage bags with hyper flies as she hurries past, her hair whipping by my teeth.

I ride it out as she paces. I feel my suede pouch around my neck but this is not like in some movie where my travelling companion tells me her life story and we become best friends.

This drug thing is not something I can do seriously, she says, Someone making me wait around. I could get involved if I wanted that.

This armchair I'm in is a deep red. I feel the stitching all the way down the inside and find plastic. I thrust this baggie at her, There, and she just mumbles, The skies are always sidewalk colour.

She is passed out. I go out alone. I'll get stabbed, raped, mugged, my mother had said and I hear, New Orleans?! I've been there. I know what it's like. There's a lot of crime and violence there. Why would you want to go there? Just a bunch of sailors and prostitutes there, my father's voice coming on again like tar. Everyone so sure of how it is and how it isn't and here I am and there's tons of people around.

There's roads all over and I'm leading myself on to the next bench.

There's one, in the corner of Jackson Square right in front of the best buskers ever. The singer's wearing a Tom Waits hat down over his eyes. A battered fedora thrown around on its own time like a plastic soda bottle in a fountain.

I start craving those chocolate-covered raisins

that I slide out of cardboard boxes when I'm watching tv.

To the singer's left there's this Bouncing Billy Bass who keeps the time. To the right there's this macabre all-arms dancing doll. Her spidery arms go so low they're almost asking to be stepped on. They circle past this cardboard suitcase on the ground waiting for raining change.

I'm wondering from this bench how I could get them to ask me to some bar. But it's like wanting them to walk through windows.

In the French market, someone's putting a vest in my hands from some place far away. My fingers waving, the bits of nail polish float up to his eyes. His name is Phil. He has bullet holes in his jacket. His buddy brags on about their 'industry', as Phil comes around to the front of the table to ask me about my suede pouch.

Inside's my last baby tooth.

Phil sends his pal on a candy bar run for dinner. He says, Yeah, of course I know my friend's the type who reads out all the ingredients off the packaging out loud when you just don't want to know, but we always end up having a lot of time to kill. It fills the holes.

He talks to me of how he goes from town to town. How he saw a Jane's Addiction concert in some cornfield in Iowa for free. How some girl for no reason during the concert grabbed his arm and took a chunk out of it with her jaws. How he tossed some bits of corn back at her.

He says, The graves are always overflowing.

Then he has to work. I have to leave.

I take the string of my pouch around my neck and hand it over to him. He says his buddy won't let him do trades for clothes. I back away.

It's empty air the whole walk home and my numb cheeks are hoping for a breeze, a paper airplane to hit them, bird shit even fuck, but eventually I get her hairspray bits that eat my face. My companion is getting ready to go back to Kagans that night where we saw a guy who was the spitting image of Lenny Kravitz. He is supposed to meet her there. He doesn't show.

She keeps ordering drinks until she finds these two guys and then our eyes meet for the first time since we stepped into this place to exchange the irony of it all: we come all the way to New Orleans to meet two shits from Montreal. Now they're over in the corner sizing up my companion and I, deciding who is going to go for whom. A couple of poker

faces.

They know the bartender and persuade her to make us these free shots of cherry something. My guy is nudging me saying it's got Tabasco sauce real hot, huh? It tastes revolting but I figure, You got to sip the whole thing down to the glass.

He is kissing me, deep ones. Phil could be passing by the window and I feel sick. My companion is poking her finger into the other guy's arm, Get me another drink. The glasses in his hand come back swaying and I'm hoping that maybe this guy will shatter them, make her face wrinkle up or something. Was it the drugs still?

She drowns out in my ear, "Supposedly it was a horse tranquilizer in practical life. I'd never give that shit to my horse. My dead brain cells tell me so."

The guy I'm with yanks me on top of a chocolate bar dispenser. He tells me things like, The know-how carry around dried raccoon penis for good luck in this town, N'awlins. I kind of wish he was telling me about a Sealtest-crate-made basketball net, something I've seen in Montreal. Then he's talking about the sunset curtains that drape the doorway of his room here and do I want to fall through them.

And then I know it will only be a matter of time until his story is shot full of holes.

You're that Rob? The Rob that's been seeing Jen Silks for like two years now. (She went to my high school.) And this is one of those so-together couples. I probably had heard that he had bought her a diamond chunker gold ring on her birthday, or that they tree planted together one whole summer, or that they vacationed in Paris, because they were so in love.

My companion's got her fingers all through the other guy's dreads and she's probably getting lost in them only to get fucked and home by one a.m. to get enough sleep. My hand leaves my pouch that's not there.

So what about Jen then, don't you love her? And he says, Oh yeah, I love her but we have an understanding.

We're watching this pool game, some of us getting shots once in awhile. And Rob goes over to his friend with his bottle of Dixie and they look at the table, their eyes veering towards us, Rob asking advice on how to play the next shot.

The other guy comes up to me and starts pitching Rob to me: Look Rob's the best guy I ever met and he's really caring and I knew he was like my soul brother from this night I met him in a bar ... blah blah blah. They're so fucking close. My companion (continued on page 14, man) ARCM TL SCAN 2020

by
Catherine
Hollis

Devonian Limestone

I remember the school bus rattling along a narrow dirt road that seemed to cling to the side of the mountain: the 2,000 foot drop to the left of the bus was almost beautiful: below, the furz of an evergreen forest stretched for miles: my taut-skinned knuckles shone white and I focused on the middle aged housewife driving the bus: at least, I imagined she was a housewife only because she seemed out of place: how she came to be driving thirty geology students to see an outcrop of 2 million year old Devonian limestone I have no idea: I only know that the delicate curlicues of distinct life-forms, the white shine of shell, all seemed out of place 2,000 feet up the side of a mountain where cold air dropped away as if a giant landslide had brought down half the sky, blue with refracted light: my father once explained why the sky is blue: I don't remember the science, I only remember growing too old to sit on his lap: something to do with my weight, or my ceaseless fidgeting, maybe sex: taboo tells us where the limits are: sometimes they drop away suddenly with breath-catching vertigo, sometimes I find myself hoping the green furze far below will be as soft and velvety to land on as it looks: tiny creatures, too, can leave their mark: cut lines for a dirt road weaving up a mountainside show geological fault lines compressing and curving with the grace of a syncline-anticline wave frozen into devonian limestone: fossils, hard as rock, mortal as a heartbeat

My dad was a geologist.

He loved
rock.

He died

when I was fifteen,
he showed me
the back-arch
of plate tectonics,

never saw me dance



Somatology
(science of living
bodies physically
considered)

by
Catherine
Hollis

On stage, I lived a lie of strength and sensuality. In life I inhabit ordinary, cellulose-pocked flesh. Its reality is a legacy of dance: a chameleon capacity for grace coupled with a tendency to trip. My gestures end in spills and broken crockery - a record three glasses and a plate in a single meal. My neck is stiff, bones rifle-crack, joints ache in the cold. My lover admires what he calls "my feline grace". I cannot bring you into this contradiction. This world where bending means folding at the waist and a door handle can be opened with a foot. This world where it hurts to sit and at night grinding bones steal sleep.

(A cartography of muscle-memory links the hurtle of my body with a delicate tracery of gestures. They frolic and cavort, they make a stately pavane. My feet still ache when I walk on them in the morning. There is a challenge to dance. Its substance is bone and gristle, sweat and pain, its reward: vertigo.)

Word is

Give us some Lip Service

April 19

9pm

You've read it, now you can help us remain functional. index is in debt and we are holding a benefit to benefit ourselves. But really, it's for a good cause. It's in your hands. Plenty of back issues available, and as if that weren't enough, there will be performances by: **Jonathan Goldstein, Edith's Mission, Rima Bannerjje, Vince Tinguely & Victoria Stanton** (of Fluffy Pagan Echo infamy), **Tanya Evanson, Melanie Newton, Heather O'Neill & Paul McRae, Todd Swift, + surprise guest(s).** Local chapbooks and the Editorial board's literary castoffs will be up for grabs starting at 8pm. It's happening at Art Kore / Is Art, 265 St. Antoine W. The cost is **\$five** if you can afford it, but **\$three** is good too. Call index at 276-4570 or 279-2031.



Listings spotlight

April 2

7:30pm

Donna Laframboise will be reading from her book *The Princess at the Window: A New Gender Morality*, at Double Hook.

April 4

7:30-9:30pm

At Double Hook there is a launch of new spring titles from **Guernica Editions**. Featuring: **Fiorella Deluca Calca, Daniel Sloate, Paris Arnopoulos**, etc. 932-5093.

April 6

9pm

The institution continues, **YAWPI** at Bistro 4 with: **Edward Fuller, Martha Wainwright, Lars, Rob Allen, Todd Swift**, and **Simon**. Call Jake: 843-6529.

April 8

8pm

Folk and Poetry night at Café So. Invited guests and open mic. 284-2804.

April 9

8pm

The (W)rites of Spring: benefit for the **League of Canadian Poets** sponsored by **Vox Hunt** and **YAWPI** at **Bistro 4**. Featuring **Adeena Karasick, Todd Swift, D.G. Jones, Anthony Berman, Pit Pup, Steve Rosenberg** and **Andrew Sweeny**. Call Jake at 843-6529.

April 10

7pm

Coles presents **Brian Maracle** reading from his book, *Back on the Rez: Finding the Way Home* at Café Nostalgie, 1425 Stanley.

April 11

8-10pm

Storycircle at the **Yellow Door**, 3625 Aylmer, N. of Prince Arthur. Bilingual participation, \$3 at the door. Call 849-2657.

April 13

9pm

An Evening of Spoken Word and Terror, featuring industrial noise monster **KNURL** at **Bistro 4**. Also with: **Todd Swift, Jonathan Goldstien, Craig Anderson, Steve Godin, Jake**, and **Chris Bell** will be launching his first floppy disc single off of his virtual reality CD, *Sax Sells*.

April 13

10am-4pm

Nebula and **David Sim** (of *Cerebus* comics) present **Spirit of National Unity: a different kind of comic convention** where self published artists and writers get to know their public. At the **Maritime Hotel**, 1455 Guy. This conference is on a one year tour of North America highlighting people with independent visions. \$4 on day, \$3 advance. Call Nebula for info: 932-3930.



April 15

8pm

Folk and Poetry night at Café So.
Invited guests and open mic. 284-2804.

April 16

6-8pm

Double Hook presents the launch of **Harry Mayerovitch's** *How Architecture Speaks: The Buildings We Make and the Lives We Lead*. 932-5093.

April 17

8pm

Perhaps? launch at Café Sarajevo with readings, performances, and music featuring: **Gilbert Salvador, Todd Babiak, Annabelle Chvostek, Mea Copa, and Catherine Manansala**. Call Jonathan at 844-8482.

April 18

7pm

QSPELL public meeting at the Atwater Library to reassess their orientation and process of awarding prizes. Written input by fax or mail until April 24. Call 933-0878.

April 19

9pm

Here it is! The **index** benefit co-sponsored by CKUT at *ArtKore / Is Art*, 265 St. Antoine W, featuring: **Tanya Evanson, Rima Bannerjee, Vince and Victoria (from FPE), Todd Swift, Jonathan Goldstien, Edith's Mission, Melanie Newton, Heather O'Neill & Paul McRae, and Todd Swift**. Book sale starts at 8pm. \$3-\$5. 276-8494, 276-4570.

April 20

9pm

YAWP! at Bistro 4 featuring: Jazzoetry with **Rhythmic Missionaries, Buffy Bonanza, Elaine O'Connor, Jen** and music by **Glen Diner, Roy, and Steve Godin**. \$3. Call Jake at 843-6529.

April 22

8pm

Folk and Poetry night at Café So.
Invited guests and open mic. 284-2804.

April 23

8:30am - 5:30pm

McGill 1996 Book Fair Depot Day. Clear out your cupboards for a good cause. Book Fair will be Oct. 23-24. Redpath Hall. Call: 398-5000.

April 24

9pm

Urban Wanderers Reading Series begins today at Bistro 4. **Sheri D. Wilson** launches *Girl's Guide to Giving Head*, **Catherine Kidd**, and **Ran Elfassy**. Call 484-3186.

April 25

8-10pm

Storycircle at the Yellow Door, 3625 Aylmer, N. of Prince Arthur. Bilingual participation, \$3 at the door. Call 849-2657.

April 25

8pm

Enough Said presents **Tongue-Tied Teasers** at Bistro 4 featuring the monster surreal monologist, **Sheri D. Wilson** and friends. Call Lee. 278-

5939.

April 27

8pm

Fringe Festival Benefit spoken word show, at Café So. \$3-5. Plenty of exciting performances to help fund the fringe. Call 849- F.E.S.T.

April 28

8pm

Mitsiko presents **La Vache Enragée** at Bistro 4. 848-3186.

April 30

8:30pm

Salman Husain and **Atif Siddiqi** host **Amethyst Tuesdays** which has moved onto the Plateau to Café So, 12 Rachel W. An eclectic salon des artistes featuring performances, exhibits, dj tobias, and a cocktail included in the cover of \$5. 279-2031.

May 2

8pm

Enough Said presents **Tongue-Tied Teasers** at Bistro 4 featuring the high powered language poet **Carla Harriman** who will be launching her new City Lights title as well as performance video installation. Call Lee. 278-5939.

In Other Words

Tongue Tied: A word Festival is happening in the first week of May. This a bunch of bilingual events that form a launch of **Production Langue - Liée** which is dedicated to promoting the arts in innovative ways. Their productions are bilingual and aim to make a significant impact on Montréal's artistic and literary landscape.

May 3: A francophone performance and musique actuel cabaret at Espace Cabaret in the Musée Juste Pour Rire.

May 4: Slam featuring poets from Nuyorican Café in N.Y. and Montréal's best.

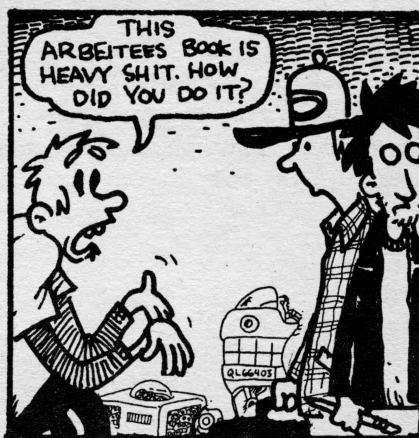
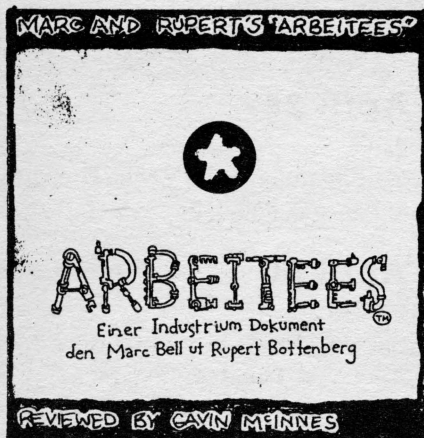
May 5: Readings at Espace Cabaret featuring B.C.'s best: **Sharon Thesen, Susan Musgrave, and Sheri D. Wilson**, as well as **Gail Scott** and others.

May 5: Drive-in Dérive at Espace Cabaret featuring American premiere language poet, **Carla Harriman** and Canada's premiere sound poet, **Paul Dutton**.

Contact Scott Duncan or Jasmine Châtelain at 495-4629.

ADAPT SCAN 2020

Reviews



lean, mean, webzines

Quilt Magazine - alcor.concordia.ca/~ig_hein
it's a bunny - <http://www.iti.qc.ca/iti/bunny/bunny.html>

The two most common W's missing from WWW are the What? and the Why? Too often you have to ask yourself what the hell is this? More often you have to ask yourself why? Two recent homegrown web sites - *Quilt* and *it's a bunny* - are clear on form and function. And worth the trip down that long info highway. They are lean, mean, webzines.

Quilt, edited by Ingrid Hein, is a good, fine thing. *Quilt* is a women's magazine on the still male-dominated internet who's mission statement is "to direct and organize issues of concern to women on the net...an effort to create a place for women to express themselves." With its first issue - *Women Against Violence* - *Quilt* has already created a vital and pow-

erful website. I got gut-sick reading the individual names of 317 women and young girls who were killed by men since December 6th, 1989. *Quilt* is using the power of the Web to exercise a right to history. *Quilt* is a voice (voices) that cannot be silenced.

Quilt is still under construction - a few of the links don't work and the letters page hasn't gotten off the ground. The poem entitled *Canadian Sunset* by Hodee Edwards is not poetry. It is a rant - and not very good. But quilts get bigger and better - they did at the hands of my grandmother.

The next issue is on abortion and if you want to submit or write a letter you can get in touch with *Quilt* by email at ig_hein@alcor.concordia.ca. *Quilt* strives to be collaborative, with each issue continually growing as people "stitch" things in. *Quilt* is visually warm and inviting like its name and easier to interface than your vcr. Point your browser to

alcor.concordia.ca/~ig_hein.

It's a bunny is the first literary e-zine to broadcast from Montreal. It's a ... well, a bunny. And as good, if not better than most literary ezines now available on the WWW. *it's a bunny* is one of the finest marriages of HTML (ask your favourite alpha geek) and art I've ever seen. It's sharp and elegant with just enough bells and whistles - the random messages are a nice touch too. *get a life/submit to the bunny/let me out/bunny rules ok/go play bingo. it's a bunny* also has an interesting link to *The Church of the Bunny* where you are welcomed into the *World Wide Warren*. Weird.

The writing in *it's a bunny* is all top-notch. Grant Loewen's brand of black-magic realism (*Hollywood North. Where you can see someone else as yourself in a movie:*) is just plain cool. All the fiction is first rate. The *Academy Award* for best bunny hop goes to Golda Fried. In *and it all went tremola* Golda Fried doesn't just write - she sings, she scats, she cooks. We can only expect greatness from this young woman. Something is definitely in her cream soda.

Jennifer Alexin delivers a wake-up call in *The New Pants*

with "Wake up you fuck, you fucking fuck-up." This story moved me as only pants can. Bee Macguire, Todd Swift and Jonathon Goldstein give good poetry. Essays by Jessica Argyle and Lydia Eugene supply the requisite dose of academic seriousness and the vernissage of paintings by Karin Szlagowski is good - I did, however, miss the cheap and free white wine.

it's a bunny is on the web at <http://www.iti.qc.ca/iti/bunny/bunny.html> Or email the bunny@iti.qc.ca and submit. Submit to the bunny.

Both *Quilt* and *it's a bunny* support the *Free Speech Online Blue Ribbon Campaign*. The blue ribbon is a symbol of support for the preservation of civil rights online. More about this on the web at eff.org/blueribbon.

The locals are surfing and the waves are good. Check it out for yourself.

by Dan Mitchell

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APRIL EVENTS

April 6 • YAWP! featuring Edward Fuller and Rob Allen

April 9 • The (W)rites of Spring with Vox Hunt & YAWP!

April 13 • Industrial noise with KNI RL and friends

April 20 • Jazzotry at YAWP!

April 25 • Tongue Tied Teasers with Sheri D. Wilson

April 28 • Mitsiko and La Vache Enragée

May 2 • Tongue Tied Teasers with Carla Harriman

leans over and slurs, It sounds like you want to fuck him.

But he keeps on about how I should fuck Rob because we're all free and we're all brothers and sisters. He won't stop until my companion drags me away and we taxi cab out of there. We can hear them shouting, No guts! No guts. Just what the frat guys had yelled from a balcony on Bourbon Street when we didn't respond to their calls, Beads for tits. And Rob and his friend probably have each other's arms around their necks telling themselves, It's bad timing, that's all.

I'm staring where my feet disappear behind the driver's seat. She says, You've got to stop looking at me like I'm some Scooper or something that sleeps with any trash.

The cab driver could be driving us straight into the dark river.

On our last night we run into Phil and she knows I like him. She goes, No, we can't go with them to Kagans, we have to eat haute Creole cuisine. That's way too expensive for them. But we'll meet you guys at Cafe Brazil later, I emphasize, grabbing Phil's jacketed arm. Phil just keeps gazing down at my nail polished nails the whole time while his pal mutters, Yeah right, I know how it is. I watch them fade down this boulevard of broken cobblestone, hands trying to fill their pockets.

We will, I murmur.

I take one look at my black charred chicken dripping with juices inside and Cafe Brazil ends up having a cover charge. I case the place but they're nowhere in the five mile radius. And they aren't at Kagans either.

It wasn't meant to be, she says.

I'm giving myself ulcers thinking about it over and over ...

A couple years later while I was travelling through Vancouver I just happened to run into her at a bar, The Cambie, on a Welfare Wednesday when all the beers were overflowing. She hugged me right away and I pictured her nails on my back giving me ten red dots.

She had me over for wine as we watched the rain soaked street from her doorstep. I shifted my cigarette from hand to hand, while she chimed, I can't believe you'd smoke.

She even gave out some of her story like there had been time between us and that was enough. How

she drove over to Vancouver with some guy from Montreal afraid to hit moose. How she passed through the States because the gas was cheaper. How this guy who she's with decides to tell her when they get there, Oh, by the way, I have some drugs on me.

And she confessed to me how she'd idle for days burning holes in the couch with cigarettes, with her shit kicker boots sprawled out on the floor. Considering becoming a heroin addict.

It was the time to do it in her grand scheme of things. And then she'd clean up and get married and make horse pişatas on her kids' birthdays with Hershey kisses inside.

But every week, someone in Vancouver was OD'ing because the latest shipment from China or somewhere far away was way more pure than users were expecting.



Each word made it worse as she went on to say that the move to Vancouver was scary and it had taken her awhile to make new friends. You couldn't staple those kinds of words together.

You know, she said to me, I got myself out here. And then she stressed that she was really happy we had done New Orleans. It had a way of hitting you into the present.

So what are you up to now? she asks me.

Well, this cardboard suitcase with me tells it all. It is white and has the words written on it in black chalk like gunsmoke: LOOKING FOR PHIL.



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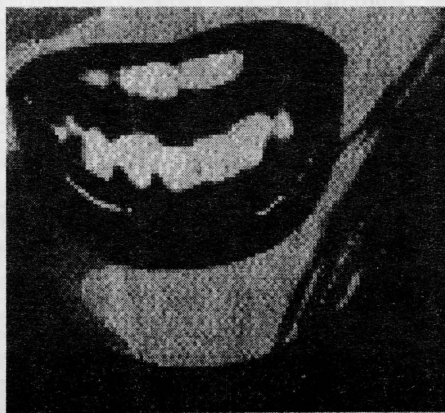
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Heather O'Neill & Paul McRae
Todd Swift

& Lots more

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